

Carolina country



The Dumb Deck

and other bad ideas

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A Free Car with Every Watch?...Keep Reading

I love classic watches. They are finely tuned miniature mechanical marvels that are both beautiful and functional. But many Swiss models cost more than my new car. So we at Stauer decided to replicate the movement of a magnificent \$26,000 Swiss Automatic watch but sell it to you for only \$198. So you end up with \$25,802 in change. That's enough to buy a brand new sedan or SUV.

Is their watch really worth \$26,000...

Well we don't believe that any watch is. That's the point. How did we build such a fine machine for such a low price? We decided that we could save you a fortune on the perfect watch if we moved the factory across the border and out of Switzerland. By using Swiss built machinery and Swiss trained engineers, Stauer is able to build this magnificent limited edition Stauer Monaco automatic timepiece for 93% less than a comparable luxury model.

Our factory spent over \$22 million on Swiss made machinery to insure the highest quality parts. We hired Swiss trained engineers to manage the production. We even purchased Swiss calibrators to insure rigorous accuracy. But we avoided the high taxes and high marketing costs in Switzerland.

We built this brilliant 24k rose gold plated timepiece with a 6-hand movement. The Stauer Monaco displays the date and day of the week. A third interior dial displays 24-hour military time. The exquisite automatic movement is powered by your body's motion so it never needs batteries. The interior workings have over 185 parts assembled by hand. Twenty-four rubies act to minimize the friction on the gears and rotors so the movement maintains incredible accuracy. Every single watch is timed for 15 days before it leaves the factory.

You can tell the quality by the smooth sweeping motion of the second hand. It doesn't click like a mass produced quartz movement. Plus, the crocodile embossed leather band doesn't pinch like many metal bands but comes with a butterfly-locking clasp that is easier to operate than other buckles.

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Cut out the high priced jewelry store. Stop paying for the yacht race sponsorships and for outrageous 5th Avenue rents that inflate the prices of the "luxury" brands. Stauer brings the ultimate luxury watch directly to you. This one comes with the

added luxury of keeping your money in your wallet, not on your wrist.

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

(800) 662-8835

carolina.country@ncemcs.com

www.carolinacountry.com

Editor
Michael E.C. Gery, (800/662-8835 ext. 3062)

Senior Associate Editor
Denise C. Gannon, CCC (800/662-8835 ext. 3209)

Associate Editor
Tara Verna, (800/662-8835 ext. 3134)

Contributing Editor
Karen Olson House, (800/662-8835 ext. 3036)

Art Director
Dore L. Ferrari, (800/662-8835 ext. 3090)

Graphic Design Intern
Kath Ann Bright, (800/662-8835 ext. 3110)

Business Coordinator
Tina Lloyd, (800/662-8835 ext. 3091)

Advertising Manager
Jennifer Boedart Hoey, (800/662-8835 ext. 3077)

Executive Vice President & CEO
Chuck Terrill

Senior Vice President, Corporate Relations
Dele Hotchkiss

North Carolina's electric cooperatives provide reliable, safe and affordable electric service to 850,000 homes, farms and businesses in North Carolina. The 27 electric cooperatives are each member-owned, not-for-profit and overseen by a board of directors elected by the membership.

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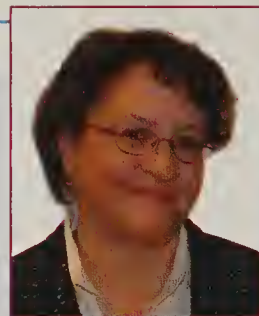
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Touchstone Energy reflects the cooperative advantage

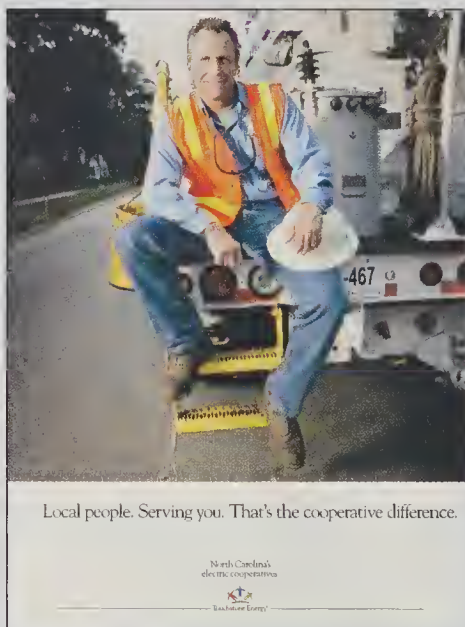
By Jane Pritchard



In today's climate of corporate distrust, it's more important than ever that electric cooperatives communicate to their members that they're part of something unique. The Touchstone Energy brand has given your electric co-op a vehicle to ensure that the cooperative core values—integrity, accountability, innovation and a longstanding commitment to community—are realized by its members. Research shows that less than 25 percent of people interviewed really understand what electric cooperatives are and how they differ from other kinds of utilities. We believe that people will prefer the cooperative way of doing business if they are aware of what that is. That's why the nation's electric cooperatives banded together in 1998 to create the Touchstone Energy brand.

More than 600 electric co-ops in 44 states are getting the cooperative message out to their members through community support and involvement activities, communications and advertising. The Touchstone Energy brand message is clear and simple: Electric cooperatives favor consumers because they are not motivated by profits, but instead by meeting the needs of their members and their communities through excellent customer service, local presence, accountability, and most important, by earning your trust every day.

By working together and pooling resources, electric cooperatives are being cost-efficient in creating and delivering employee training, advertising and strategic communications. This cooperative effort allows the country's Touchstone Energy co-ops to deliver the same important message about the cooperative advantage.



Communicating the value of the co-op employee

Our cooperatives, like any business, have an array of assets. Lines. Poles. Substations. Computers. Trucks. The list is long, but by far the most valuable assets on our co-op balance sheet are our employees. It's vital that our members understand how much the cooperative way of doing business relies on the people who make it successful.

Our employees are experienced, knowledgeable and highly trained. They have a genuine desire to provide exceptional customer service to their friends and neighbors who are the owners of this business. One of the ads that appears in Carolina Country magazine and similar publications nationwide illustrates this message. The ad depicts the co-op line technician, with the slogan, "Local people. Serving you. That's the cooperative difference."

The fact that our employees live and work in the communities we serve gives cooperatives a competitive edge. We know our members. We're accountable to them, and we would have it no other way. Our co-ops are Touchstone Energy cooperatives, and

our tagline is "the power of human connections." It's appropriate, because that "power of human connections" between our employees and you prompts us to set the bar higher on providing great customer service.

Honest advertising—earning your trust

Touchstone Energy cooperatives strive to earn our members' trust every day. You may have seen our cooperatives' ads featuring the father and son: "Earning your trust every day. That's the cooperative difference." These words mean something to electric co-ops. They aren't words thrown on an advertisement and forgotten. They are integral components of your electric cooperative's goals.

In the wake of numerous Big Business scandals, consumer trust in cooperative America remains strong, because the owners and the customers are one and the same. We exist solely to serve our member-owners, not to make a profit for outside investors. And we work to articulate that message to you through our advertising and communications efforts.

We're accountable to our members because we're local and because they are our owners. Our directors and employees live in the cooperative community. Our kids and grandkids go to the same schools. We have a stake in the economies and the well-being of the communities we serve and live in.

We know that trust is earned. Day in and day out, we are working to earn your continued trust – through quality customer service, consistent communication, strong policies, fiscal

responsibility and efficient procedures.

Pooling resources through a national network

Now in its sixth year, Touchstone Energy has a record number of cooperatives pooling resources and taking advantage of economies of scale to communicate to their member-owners the benefits of being part of an electric co-op. Yes, Touchstone Energy is a brand. More than that though, Touchstone Energy has given electric cooperatives a vehicle to share with you our promise to do business with integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community.

That's the cooperative difference. And that's what we work to convey to you through our advertisements, community involvement and other communications efforts.

Jane Pritchard is director of corporate communications for the North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives. She also chairs the national Touchstone Energy Advertising and Promotions Committee.

The power of human connections in Iraq

I just wanted to write and share a little story with you. The other night I was running a mission in a nearby town just after dark on response to an IED (improvised explosive device). It was in the middle of the town, and we had to clear the streets in the area. It just so happened that the power station was in that area, so I had to clear all the workers out of it, also.

About 30 minutes into the mission, the power station went down, so I went to find a worker for the plant. The worker and I went into the plant where I found that at night they power the whole city with four diesel generators. Along the walls were hundreds of regular household breakers tied into the four generators. When we got them running, he and I went through and had to flip all the breakers by hand, just as you would do at home.

I know it doesn't sound like much, but I just thought it was cool to be close to 7,000 miles from home and still get the chance to help people get their power back on.

Kelly Ritter

Kelly Ritter of Robbins is an apprentice lineman IB at Randolph EMC, Asheboro. He was a staff sergeant in the National Guard, stationed in northern Iraq on May 7, when he wrote this e-mail message to the co-op's Robbins office.



CONTACT US

Web site: www.carolinacountry.com
E-mail: Carolina.country@ncemcs.com
Phone: (919) 875-3062
Fax: (919) 878-3970
Mail: 3400 Sumner Blvd.
 Raleigh, NC 27616



Civil Air Patrol: a rewarding experience

I just wanted to thank you for running the article on the Civil Air Patrol in the April issue of Carolina Country. I am a senior member of a North Carolina squadron and I wanted to say what a rewarding experience it has been for me so far. It is an honor and privilege to be a member of this great organization, and I'm proud to be able to serve my country through the missions of CAP.

I would encourage any adult or young adult interested in aviation and serving their country to visit the national Web site at www.cap.gov and find a squadron in their area. Take the time to visit the unit and talk to the members and see for yourself what CAP is all about. I promise you won't be disappointed in what you find.

Scott B. Malizia
 Huntersville



For Independence Day, we thought you'd like to see our American flag. We live on a small farm in Carthage (that's a Randolph EMC pole nearby), and we enjoy looking at our flag every day. It reminds us of the sacrifices made by so many for us to have our freedom.

Michael & Julie Harris
 Carthage

Thanks for the safety quiz

I was in a doctor's office yesterday and picked up this magazine to read while waiting. It is May 2004. I must say how much I enjoyed the Electrical Safety Quiz. I learned something new, also, which made my day, since I am founder and president of Lightning Strike & Electric Shock Survivors International: www.lightning-strike.org

Steve Marshburn
 Jacksonville

A floor lamp that spreads sunshine all over a room and pays for itself!

Introducing the

Balanced Spectrum® floor lamp

The Balanced Spectrum® floor lamp combines the benefits of natural daylight indoors with an energy savings of \$51 over the life of one bulb!*



The Balanced Spectrum® floor lamp will change the way you see and feel about your living or work spaces. Here's how:

- **You will see with more clarity and enjoyment as this lamp provides sharp visibility for close tasks and reduces eyestrain.**
- **SAVE \$51 in energy cost over the life of one Balanced Spectrum™ bulb!** A 150 watt incandescent bulb uses \$.013 cents per kilowatt hour in energy cost. The Balanced Spectrum bulb uses an average of 30% less energy which saves you \$0.9 cents/kWh. Based on 5,000 hours bulb life, the Balanced Spectrum bulb will save \$46 in energy cost. Plus, because the Balanced Spectrum bulb last 10 times longer than an incandescent bulb priced at an average of \$.50, an additional \$5 savings is realized.
- **Its 27-watt compact fluorescent bulb is the equivalent to a 150-watt ordinary light bulb.** This makes it perfect for activities such as reading, writing, sewing, needlepoint, and especially for aging eyes. This lamp has a flexible gooseneck design for maximum efficiency and a dual position control switch for 18 and 27 watts of power, with an "Instant On" switch that is flicker-free. The high-tech electronics, user-friendly design, and bulb that lasts five times longer than an ordinary bulb make this product a must-have.

*Source: "Lighting the Way to Energy Savings"; 1999

Try the Balanced Spectrum® floor lamp now at it's lowest price of less than \$70! Now more than ever is the time to add sunshine to every room in your house at this fantastic low price! The Balanced Spectrum® floor lamp comes with a one-year manufacturer's limited warranty and TechnoScout's exclusive guarantee. Try this product for 60 days and return it for the product purchase price if not completely satisfied.

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First patented dish antenna brings in broadcast signals other antennas can't find.

The XiumAir's™ Spilateral technology conquers ghosts, fuzzy pictures and rooftop monstrosities.



World's first dish-type TV antenna for great local reception

If you live in an area where TV reception is weak, 'rabbit ears' and ugly rooftop antennas may only bring in fuzzy signals that aren't worth watching. Enter the XiumAir Antenna -- the world's first spilateral antenna designed to bring in strong video and audio signals from all directions for great TV/stereo reception. Patented spilateral technology lets the XiumAir grab signals coming from all directions from as far away as 50 miles. Its 18" parabolic reflective / ground element increases signal strength and stability to give you local broadcast reception as good as, or better than, cable TV or satellite reception. There's no expensive installation required, and it's fully compatible with any TV or stereo tuner for high-energy VHF / UHF / FM reception.

No aiming, rotating or tuning.
XiumAir's new 83-channel technology combines an all-in-one device for receiving high-energy TV reception. Unlike most external antennas, the XiumAir doesn't have to be pointed in the direction of transmitters. That's the beauty of spilateral technology. You can mount the dish-like antenna indoors or outside (on your roof or a horizontal mast). The higher the elevation,

The world's first dish-type TV antenna - the last antenna you'll ever need!



- NO MORE HUGE, UNSIGHTLY ROOFTOP ANTENNAS
- CLEARER PICTURE AND SOUND
- NO MORE AIMING
- EASY TO INSTALL Anywhere!!

XiumAir™ Works!

No matter where you live, the XiumAir spilateral "dish" antenna will collect all of the signals available, from any direction without the need for rotating or tuning.



the better signal-grabbing performance you get. You don't have to aim it in any direction or rotate it for different stations. The XiumAir gives fully automatic multi-directional tuning in any direction for great TV viewing.

The versatile antenna with many uses.
If you have a DSS satellite system, the XiumAir is the ideal complement for receiving local channels without monthly fees. And when high definition broadcast TV arrives in a few years, you will be ready. Plus you can use the antenna now for AM / FM stereo, home-based CB systems, and shortwave radio. The XiumAir Antenna features compact, modern styling that will blend in with almost any decor. The UV-protected housing is made of impact-resistant copolymer, making the exterior resistant to weathering and color change. It includes a standard cable connector for any cable-ready hookup. The XiumAir Antenna delivers maximum local broadcast reception to any television, stereo or any other audio or video receiver, without the use of unsightly, ugly or 'wind damaged' antennas.

Enjoy better TV reception - risk free!
This unique design is the result of years of research and testing, and now you can try it for yourself risk-free. Each XiumAir Antenna System is handcrafted and individually tested

.....as if **you were There!!**

for high quality performance. With the XiumAir Antenna, you'll eliminate those unsightly antennas for good. The XiumAir Antenna comes with a 30-day manufacturer's limited warranty and Xium's exclusive risk-free home trial. If you are not satisfied for any reason, just call us for free expert installation assistance, or simply return it within 30 days for a refund, less S&H.

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Seeking sites for measuring wind energy potential

The North Carolina Solar Center is accepting applications from eastern North Carolina people interested in measuring the wind energy potential at their property. The NC SOW program (NC State Observation of Wind) will loan free anemometer wind-measuring devices to those accepted into the program.

The purpose of the anemometer loan program is to take the guesswork out of determining if a turbine installation is feasible. Among the renewable energy technologies available today, wind energy is the most cost competitive in comparison to conventional energy generation practices, says the solar center.

"North Carolina coastal landowners, businesses, and communities stand to benefit from this program because it provides them with the opportunity to obtain quantitative wind data at relatively no cost," reports Beth Mast of the NC Solar Center. "The equipment and data provided is free." The systems to be loaned typically cost anywhere from \$1,500 to \$7,500, she said.

The program hopes to involve farmers. "Wind production is one of the few bright opportunities in the rural landscape of the coast," said Steve Kalland of the NC Solar Center. "Wind is homegrown energy that we can harvest right alongside our corn, soy-

beans, hogs, poultry or other crops. We can use the energy in our local communities, or we can export it to other markets. We need to look carefully at wind energy as a source of economic growth for the coast."

The anemometers will be mounted atop a 66-foot, 100-foot or 164-foot tower that is supported by guy wires. The data collected from these systems will tell the landowner the wind speed, wind direction and the frequency at which each occurs. Selection criteria will be based on geographic location, the variety of applicants, and target areas for needed data collections stations.

NC SOW is in its first year of operation and is administered by North Carolina Solar Center at N.C. State University with assistance from the N.C. State Energy Office.

Those interested in participating in the loan program should contact Beth Mast, NC Solar Center, at (919) 515-5689 or beth_mast@ncsu.edu. Additional information about Wind Powering America and the NC State Observation of Wind program can be found at www.eere.energy.gov/windpoweringamerica/



Shawn Fitzpatrick of the North Carolina Solar Center makes wire connections to the weather vane that will collect wind energy data atop a 66-foot tower.



One of the NRG Systems anemometers that the North Carolina Solar Center is loaning.

North Carolina's primary election takes place July 20

After years of political wrangling and lawsuits, North Carolina's legislative districts may finally have taken their final form. In early April, the U.S. Justice Department cleared North Carolina's updated maps under the Voting Rights Act. The federal clearance was necessary in order to schedule primary elections July 20.

Are you wondering how the latest round of redistricting affects your representation? The North Carolina General Assembly's Web site contains maps and other redistricting information. You can check out the districts in your area and see which incumbents may run for your district. The General Assembly's Web site is www.ncga.state.nc.us/homePage.pl.

The primary will include candidates for President, U.S. Senator, Congress and Governor, as well as other statewide offices, General Assembly seats and judgeships. Voters will receive a ballot for the political party in which they are registered, unless they are registered as "unaffiliated," in which case they can choose which party primary to vote in.

If you are not registered to vote in North Carolina, you have until June 25 to do so in order to vote in the primary.

Many state government program offices can handle voter registration, or you can contact your county Board of Elections.

To save a trip to the polls on July 20, voters can cast "no excuse" absentee ballots July 1-17. You must request an absentee ballot from your County Board of Elections before July 13.

For more information visit the state Board of Elections Web site at www.sboe.state.nc.us

Kill-A-Watt Energy Efficiency Tester



The Kill-A-Watt appliance efficiency tester measures electricity consumption by the kilowatt-hour and displays it on a large LCD display. All you have to do is plug in your appliance. Other options with the tester allow you to figure your electrical expenses by the hour, day, week, month and even the year. Visit www.p3international.com/products for more information.

Energy Hog Busters help America use energy efficiently

Look out Smokey Bear and McGruff the Crime Dog. The Energy Hog just came to town and he's ready to pig out.

The Department of Energy in partnership with the National Fuel Funds Network and other public and private organizations have launched the Energy Hog as part of a campaign to educate the public about ways to lower electric bills by saving energy. But, unlike Smokey Bear and McGruff, who benevolently speak out about fighting forest fires and crime, respectively, the Energy Hog is a "spokesvillain" toggged out in leather jacket and jeans, and representing wasteful energy use.

The National Fuel Funds Network is a grassroots advocacy group, which includes the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), and represents a variety of private- and utility-sponsored utility-bill payment assistance programs. These programs help families whose federal energy assistance under the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) has expired or is not sufficient.

The ads encourage children to become "Energy Hog Busters" by finding instances of energy waste in their homes. The campaign features TV and radio ads, and includes a Web site with helpful energy-saving tips that can benefit children and adults.

According to the Energy Department, the average American household spends 3.5 percent of its annual income on energy bills, while low-income households spend 14 percent.

The federally funded LIHEAP program, which helps low-

income households meet their home heating and cooling costs, covers only an

estimated 20 percent of those who are eligible, said Bob Patton, senior advisor for education programs, and NRECA's representative on the National Fuel Funds Network board. The federal funding gap, combined with two very cold winters in a row and rising energy prices, makes the need for energy-bill assistance a growing problem, he added.

The Energy Hog Web site has interactive sections for students, teachers and parents.

For more information about the ad campaign, visit www.energryhog.org. Or contact Energy Outreach Colorado at (303) 825-8750, ext. 230. For more information about the National Fuel Funds Network, call (202) 824-0660 or visit www.nationalfuel funds.org.

—Hannah Kamenetsky



The Energy Hog appeared at a Washington D.C. school on the day the new energy-saving program was announced.



At Work in Washington

Directors of North Carolina's electric cooperatives met with Congressional representatives in May to discuss issues affecting the utility industry and rural communities. In photo at left, Mack Shoaf, left, of Winston-Salem (EnergyUnited) had an opportunity to thank Rep. Howard Coble (Republican from Greensboro) for his



help with legislation that aids co-ops in restoring power after major outages. In right photo, Rep. Bob Etheridge (Democrat from Lillington) meets with delegates from Central EMC, South River EMC, Four County EMC, EnergyUnited and Randolph EMC.

SPEAKERS OF THE HOUSE

In spite of the odds against them, Jim Black and Richard Morgan have steadily steered a House of Representatives evenly divided between the political parties

After the 2002 general election, 61 Republicans and 59 Democrats were elected or re-elected to the North Carolina House of Representatives. The slim margin dividing the parties made it virtually impossible to garner enough votes on either side of the aisle to elect a speaker to preside over the entire body for the session beginning January 2003. Eventually, the members agreed to experiment by sharing the speakership for the first time in the state's legislative history. Elected as co-speakers were Democrat James B. Black of Mecklenburg County and Republican Richard T. Morgan of Moore County. They alternate at the podium during sessions, one presiding on one day and the other the next. They also confer on appointing chairs of the various legislative committees.

Jim Black has represented District 36 in the House since 1981. Richard Morgan has represented District 52 since 1989.

Soon after their election as co-speakers, Black and Morgan spoke to delegates of North Carolina's electric cooperatives during the annual meeting of their statewide organizations. The co-speakers said they like and respect each other, and they asked members of both parties to give them a chance at making the shared speakership work. Even though many political observers and leaders from both parties predicted difficulties for the co-speakership, Black and Morgan had confidence it would succeed.

As the General Assembly returned to Raleigh last May for the "short session" of budgetary adjustments, Carolina Country paid a visit to Reps. Black and Morgan to ask how the experiment has worked. During the interview, both legislators praised the work that the state's electric cooperatives are doing on behalf of rural communities and economic development. They each added that they understand and are sensitive to the needs of rural North Carolina.

—Michael E.C. Gery

Has the co-speakership been successful?

MORGAN: There's no question that the times dictate coalition government. Since the co-speakership, we have replaced terms like "partisan bickering" and "gridlock" with terms like "cooperation" and "progress." We've worked together with that spirit, and the committee chairs have adopted the same approach.

BLACK: People predicted that it wouldn't work, that there would be chaos and gridlock. But it turned out that we work very well together. Remember that I didn't just meet Richard Morgan on January 28 of last year. I've known him a long time, and felt we could work well together. We don't always agree on everything, but we're always straight with each other, and you have to be for this to work.

MORGAN: This co-speakership is formed on a foundation of trust. Jim Black and I talk every day. Communication is a key ingredient of the success we've had.

What are some examples of the successes?

BLACK: We passed a budget last year before Easter for the first time in 20 years. It went to the Senate and came back, we worked out our differences, and we were out of here the second week in July.

MORGAN: Some people questioned our ability to get through the "cross-over," which is that time when non-money bills must go from one chamber to the other chamber in order to remain eligible for consideration. Well, we had one of the smoothest cross-overs since I've been here and in recent memory.

BLACK: They predicted we'd fail in coming up with a redistricting plan, because that is the most political thing we do here. But we produced a plan, and while not everyone got what they hoped for, it received overwhelming support and has been upheld.

Have you noticed that business gets done faster because each party has a speaker?

MORGAN: We come to town, do our business as a "citizens legislature," then leave. That helps establish public confidence in this institution. But quality is just as important. Because we could leave town when we did, it allowed us in the beginning of July last year to make quality appointments and establish interim select committees and joint select committees to study issues and make recommendations. That interim period and quality appointments lead to better legislation and better public policy. We had committees working between July 2003 and May 2004, whereas under the traditional system they might not have even been appointed until January 2004.

BLACK: And it saves the taxpayers money because we're not here all year.

The House has 34 new members this session, an unusually high number. How have they responded to the co-speaker system?

MORGAN: They have been very important to the process. They will be the leaders of this Assembly after we're gone, and they have started out working together. They came in not knowing the difficult times we've had in the past, and we hope they never will.

BLACK: What we have is a coalition of folks who are in a way forced to work together. And we hope they see the advantages of that and continue it as best they can.

If a co-speakership is inclined to focus on issues where there's a common interest between political parties, does it at the same time tend to neglect what may be more controversial issues?

BLACK: On both sides there are staunch party advocates who will always have stronger views on certain issues. I hear regularly from Democratic leaders across the state who support issues they want us to deal with. Sometimes there's a right time, and sometimes there not a right time to deal with those issues.

MORGAN: The people did not elect members of the House to come up here and not be able to think for themselves. We always have to be mindful that the House of Representatives is the one state constitutional body that is closest to the people. Parties are not always going to agree on everything, but they can agree some of the time.



Democratic Rep. Jim Black (left) and Republican Rep. Richard Morgan share the duties of Speaker of the North Carolina House of Representatives.

BLACK: There's always a split on issues. And you'll get a handful who will get the party leadership across the state all riled up. But the rank and file members of the Republican Party are probably proud of what we've been able to achieve, just as the rank and file Democrats are. Both Democrats and Republicans have praised us for how well we work together.

MORGAN: Without coalitions, we have gridlock. Are the extreme points lessened as a priority? Perhaps they are. The result, however, is that real emphasis is placed on the fiscal well-being of the state, especially during this difficult economic time. The only people who whine and moan are the folks who do not get their way.

Have you heard from legislators in other states about how the co-speakership here works?

BLACK: Well, the Speakers Conference was in Hawaii last year, and that was too far for me to go. But I'll go to the one in Michigan this year. Yes, they have asked us about it. And I encourage them to try it if they have the opportunity. But I tell them that you have to be very careful to shoot straight with each other and not go running out in front of the other and not to overshadow the other. We have to train our staffs to restrain themselves in the same way.

MORGAN: We've been featured in the Atlanta Constitution, the L.A. Times, "The Daily Show" in Washington. There's been a lot of attention. I tell them that there is a basis of trust in what we're doing. There's no question that this would not have worked as well as it has if we hadn't trusted each other.

Do you think we'll see a shared speakership in the House during the next session?

BLACK: If there is a 60-60 split, chances are very good that we will see co-speakers and shared chairmanships as well. With the new districts, it looks like we may see an equal number of Democrats and Republicans.

MORGAN: I said in 2000 that we probably won't have a decisive majority for the next decade. But it will be up to the House of Representatives to decide whether or not to continue it.

To contact the speakers and to learn more about the North Carolina House of Representatives, visit the Web site at www.ncga.state.nc.us/House/House.html.

Rep. Black's office address is 2304 Legislative Building, Raleigh, NC 27601-1096.

Rep. Morgan's office address is 301 Legislative Office Building, Raleigh, NC 27603-5925.

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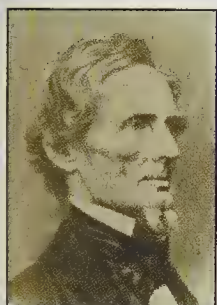
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Confederate Half Dollar Stolen from President Sells for \$632,000.00

Richmond, VA.—Headlines were made recently when a mysterious 1861 silver U.S. half dollar bearing the seal of the Confederacy sold at public auction for the incredible sum of \$632,500.00. Experts have learned it is just one of four coins produced after the United States Mint in New Orleans was seized by rebels at the start of the Civil War.

Unique Coin of Both North and South

The Confederate silver half dollar is unique because it is the only coin to have the images of both North and South on one coin. One side has the United States design of Miss Liberty, while the other side has a Confederate States shield and the legend: "Confederate States of America".



Jefferson Davis

One of the coins was given to the President of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis. He carried it in his pocket as a personal "good luck" piece.

In honor of this discovery, the First Federal Mint has released a pure .999 silver Proof,

die-struck in deep dimension just like the coin minted for President Jefferson Davis. The issue price is \$50.00, but for a limited time only you may acquire it at the Advance Release price of \$29.50.

Mint Ransacked by General "Beast" Butler

Union General Benjamin "Beast" Butler recaptured the New Orleans Mint from the Rebels in 1862. The "Beast" earned his nickname for his ruthless reign as military governor of New Orleans.

Panicked Confederate Mint officials had already loaded up all of the bullion from the New Orleans Mint and shipped it up the Mississippi to avoid plunder. Thus did the dream of a Confederate coinage come to an end.



General Benjamin "Beast" Butler

Stolen, Then Vanished

In 1865 Federal troops captured President Davis in Georgia. Davis hid his beloved "lucky coin" in his belongings when he was sent to Fort Monroe, Virginia. "Beast" Butler commanded the fort. When one of Butler's officers searched Davis' possessions, the precious coin was stolen. It disappeared for many years; the hands it passed through are a mystery to this day. The reappearance and sale of this legendary coin for \$632,000.00 made headlines in the collecting world.

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These may be the best cotton-pickin' plates out there



Text and photo by Michael E.C. Gery

When Ray Keeter and Halifax County Cooperative Extension agent Arthur Whitehead sent two John Deere cotton picking machines out to the Bruce Davis farm last November, they watched each machine harvest 3.64 acres of cotton. One machine picked 7 percent more cotton than the other.

The two machines alternated picking every four rows.

"You could see the difference right across the field," says Ray Teeter. "White, brown, white, brown. Like a checkerboard."

Ray Keeter has worked on John Deere equipment for 30 years, the last 17 on his own just south of Scotland Neck. He'll work on "anything green," but he's the man to see about your Deere cotton picker. He remembers driving around and seeing all the scrap cotton still on stalks after the fall harvest, and he got to thinking about how to improve the mechanics of picking cotton. "You want to figure a way to get as much picked the first time through, instead of having to go back over the field again to get the scrap." So he designed and built a "scrapping plate" that is more efficient than the John Deere plates. He received his patent on it last winter, and now the Raytec scrapping plates sell for \$500 per row, or \$2,000 for a four-row Deere cotton picker (models 9960 and 9965).

"Farmers will say that's a lot of money," Ray says. "But when the ones around here see how they do, they come in looking for them."

The test last fall on the Brian Davis farm was not the only test of the Raytec plates, but it is the only documented one. Other tests produced similar results, Ray says. And, he

adds, everyone who's bought the plates likes them. The test with Extension agent Whitehead showed that the Raytec plates allow a picker to harvest about 165 pounds more "seed cotton" per acre and nearly 68 pounds more "lint cotton" (seed cotton that is ginned) per acre. Using a price of 65 cents per pound, the Raytec plates could earn a farmer an additional \$44 per acre, or about \$44,000 more in a season for a 1,000-acre farm, which is fairly typical for eastern North Carolina.

Ray perfected the design during the past three years. The plates are deeper, longer and closer together than Deere plates, and they allow the spindles on a picker to grab more of a cotton boll and to pick a stalk cleaner. "It won't strip the stalk," Ray says, "but it picks off more and drops less on the field, so you get more cotton in the basket."

The Raytec steel plates are specially machined and laser-cut for precision. It's simple to remove the Deere plates and substitute the Raytecs using the same bolts. "I can do it easy, so any dummy can," Ray says. And his plates can be adjusted to make up for wear. While they haven't been in service long enough to know, the plates should last for 3,000-4,000 acres before they need replacing, Ray says.

After testing earlier designs during the 2001 and 2002 harvests, he almost gave up when his mother, Grace, fell ill and died last October. Ray was used to having his mother's home-cooked dinner every day, and without her inspiration, the work slowed down, until he realized "Mama would have wanted me to keep at it."

For information, contact Ray Keeter, 177 Ark Lane, Scotland Neck, NC 27874. Phone: (252) 826-5302.

A CORNER OF A FOREIGN FIELD:

The British Cemetery on Ocracoke Island

by Robert L. Williams

Each year visitors to the Outer Banks of North Carolina delight in the scenery, nostalgia and breezy style, but many leave without realizing that the area was in 1942 the scene of some of the worst bloodshed and destruction in the early stages of World War II. Or that a tiny portion of Ocracoke Island became a British Cemetery, a corner of a foreign field that will always be England.

The quiet, dignified British Cemetery on Ocracoke Island gives you a striking reminder of the horrors of that war and the terror created by the German “unterseeboote” (U-boats) that lay in wait just off the coast and preyed upon the often defenseless ships making their way across the Atlantic Ocean. The cemetery lies just off a road that winds from Silver Lake and Ocracoke village. The story behind the tiny plot of ground is in a large sense the story of the military campaign the Germans called “Paukensschlag,” or Operation Drumbeat.

Some scholars estimate the number of ships sunk by German submarines at 397, and the number of seamen who lost their lives reaches nearly 5,000, in addition to the countless millions of dollars in cargo and vessel loss. Most of the vessels were unarmed and unescorted merchant ships, many of them carrying food and material needed for the war effort in England.

The early stages of the U-boat warfare included the first six months of 1942, when only five submarines took part in what the Germans referred to as the turkey-shoot. The subs surfaced at night and waited for the lights from coastal houses and cities and from lighthouses to silhouette the ships en route to their destinations. Ironically, the Cape Hatteras light, which had saved numberless ships from disaster, served

to reveal locations of ships to the waiting German subs. The attacks were swift and merciless. Later, Admiral Doenitz of Germany sent 12 more subs to increase the slaughter at the so-called Torpedo Junction.

It was widely reported that in Ocracoke and other Outer Banks villages residents could actually read a newspaper at midnight by the light of burning ships only a few miles away. Other residents might be shaken from their sleep by the nearby explosions and would lie in darkness while the distant flames illuminated the interior of their homes.

Rumors circulated wildly. There were even reports, later proved to be true, that German U-boats landed on the island and crew members walked ashore and made their way into town.

Xi Bradley, who enlisted in the Civil Air Patrol the day after the Dec. 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor, recalled that he and others could fly along the coast and see two and three submarines lying in shallow water just off-shore. He helped destroy some of the subs by calling in locations, and he says that once they spotted a surfaced sub with its conning tower open. They swooped low amid enemy gunfire and dropped a charge down the tower before the sub could submerge.

Bradley also recalls that his team spotted German sub crew members walking along the shore. His unit called the base and the men were captured, and later Bradley and others interrogated some of the captives. He reported that the men were desperately frightened and tired of the war, which was barely underway as far as United States involvement was concerned.



The sailors of the *Bedfordshire*

Great Britain's Prime Minister Winston Churchill sent or lent two dozen trawlers to aid in the submarine hunt. Among these ships was the HMS *Bedfordshire*, about 170 feet long, barely equipped to hunt and destroy submarines, with four officers and 33 enlisted men aboard, a mix of British and Canadians.

On the evening of May 11, 1942, two ships, the HMS *St. Loman* and the *Bedfordshire*, stalked the U-boat 558 under the command of Gunther Krech in the seas about 40 miles southeast of Cape Lookout. Krech spotted the ships and mistakenly thought they had located his sub, so he gave orders to fire at the *Bedfordshire*. Some historians argue that only one torpedo was fired and it struck its victim almost in the exact center. The explosion ripped the ship apart. It sank in seconds. Others insist that the U-558 fired a second torpedo. Whatever the number, the ship went down before rescue efforts could help the dying seamen.

All 37 seamen were killed in the attack. On May 14 two bodies washed ashore on Ocracoke Island and were identified as sailors from the *Bedfordshire*. A week later, two more bodies were found farther up the island. Of the four men, only two of them, Lt. Thomas Cunningham and telegraphist Stanley Craig, could be identified. The four men were buried on Ocracoke Island on a small parcel of land donated by the

Williams and Teeter families. Lt. Cunningham of the Royal Navy was 27 years old. Stanley Craig was 24.

Local people chose to honor the fallen seamen, first, by holding services in the Ocracoke (United) Methodist Church and, second, by burying them in the small cemetery and then later erecting a white picket fence around the graves. Headstones eventually marked the burial sites. Later, Catholic services were held for the men.

The Methodist Church, incidentally, figured prominently in another tragedy. When the *Caribsea* sailed on March 11, one of the men aboard was James Gaskill. Shortly afterwards, the father of James Gaskill saw a horrible sight: a plank bearing the name *Caribsea* had washed against the pier. That plank told the entire story. Soon afterward the cross behind the altar in the Ocracoke Methodist Church was carved from the plank that had once been part of the *Caribsea*.

At the British Cemetery, a short walk from the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Visitor Center near the ferry landing on the southern end of the island, you will see a plaque on which the first lines from Rupert Brooke's poem "The Soldier" can be seen. Brooke, who himself saw service in World War I and died of blood poisoning in 1915, wrote,

*If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is forever England.*

The Brooke quote is fitting, because that small corner of the world will indeed be forever England. The local residents buried the fallen men. The Ocracoke station of the United States Coast Guard maintained the burial plot, and in recent years the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum has funded its maintenance and coordinates an annual ceremony. And Tideland EMC provides the electric power to the site. But from that point on, the land is forever England. The British flag flies over the tiny parcel of land, and the British government now provides a new flag each year to replace the old one. For a fee of one dollar, the United States ceded or leased the land in perpetuity to the British government. And each May delegates from the British Royal Navy and the Canadian Navy join Coast Guard and other United States personnel to conduct a memorial service to honor the men who died at sea.

A similar cemetery lies in Buxton on Hatteras Island north of Ocracoke. Buried there are officer Michael Cairns of the Royal Merchant Navy and an unknown British sailor, both of whom also died during the U-boat attacks. Maintaining the

cemetery are the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum, the Hatteras Island Genealogical and Historical Society, the Coast Guard and the National Park Service.

A member of Rutherford EMC, Robert L. Williams is the author of more than 40 books and lives in Cleveland County.



The British flag flies over the Ocracoke cemetery (photo on page 16) that is the site each year of a memorial service for four British sailors who were buried there in 1942. Above, the U.S. Coast Guard joins representatives from the British and Canadian navies and other dignitaries for the ceremony.

For more information about Ocracoke Island or to receive a free visitor guide, contact the Hyde County Chamber of Commerce at 888-493-3826 or visit www.hydecountry.org.

For more information about the Outer Banks and World War II, contact the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum, P.O. Box 191, Hatteras, NC 27943. Phone: (252) 986-2995. E-mail: museum@graveyardoftheatlantic.com. Web: www.graveyardoftheatlantic.com

The two-part video "War Zone," by Kevin Duffus, is a comprehensive documentary about the Outer Banks and World War II. Each 90-minute video costs \$24.95, or get both for \$34.95. Contact Looking Glass Productions, P.O. Box 98985 Raleigh, NC 27624. Phone: 800-647-3536. E-mail: looking_glass@earthlink.net Web: www.lookingglassproductions.org

Historian David Stick has written about the Outer Banks during World War II in "The Outer Banks of North Carolina" and "Graveyard of the Atlantic," both published by the University of North Carolina Press.



True stories of throwing
good money after bad

My MONEY Pit

I don't know who came up with this topic, but it produced a good number of stories from you all about where you wasted your money. It's encouraging to see that as many women throw good money after bad as men do.

My money pit has cars in it. I always end up paying too much to buy and maintain a car, and after I sell it, I still owe money on it somehow. A friend of mine and I were having lunch locally one day and we saw the two mechanics who maintained a car of mine that I eventually traded in, and my friend asked them how they stayed in business after I moved to another shop.

Thanks to everyone who sent in stories. Next month we'll run your accounts of lessons you learned the hard way. [Deadline was June 15.] For the remaining topics in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series, see page 20.

— *Michael E.C. Gery, editor*

For more of your stories, visit our Web site at
www.carolinacountry.com



THE WOOD-BURNING HELICOPTER

My husband has always had "ideas," one of which was a wood-burning, self-propelled wooden helicopter. He is always reading articles about different ways to build and try new projects. The first I knew of this project was when he began bringing in large sheets of plywood. When I inquired what he was doing, he informed me of his intentions. Of course, I had a lot of questions, and he was very convinced this was a great idea. He worked diligently on this project for about a week or two. (I have blocked much of the cost from my memory.) The next thing I knew I was hearing all this hammering and tearing of wood. He had begun construction on this project only to find out this helicopter could not be removed through the basement doors.

Now I understand men will be men with their big boy toys. But when you are just starting out with two small children and only one income, all you can think about is that money going down the money pit.

We still have a good laugh about it just the same.

Lee Anna Hardin

Clyde

Haywood EMC

THE DOG RIDING THE SHORT BUS

Born the day before our anniversary, Banjo was destined to compete with my main man for attention and resources. He is what you call the "special occasion pup."

Waiving all financial expenditures for holidays and special occasions for 2001, I requested instead personal financial credits toward a male bull terrier. My husband agreed to pay "show price" for a "rescue" pup who won me over.



Emergency care after eating six cups of gravel, visits to the doggy psychologist for behavioral issues and an operation to build a knee, consumed all my special occasion credits for 2002.

I continued to justify our unexpected expenditures by utilizing this system in 2003 when Banjo needed another knee built as well as corrective surgery. My sister had him micro-chipped for Christmas to assure that I would not misplace my "special occasion pup" in 2004. It has worked. For Valentines Day, my birthday and Easter, I have requested credit consideration. The pup refuses to walk our hardwood floors throughout our home which is leading to further professional advice.

The dog that my husband says "rides the short bus" continues to be as sweet to me as a box of chocolates with his marshmallow head and jelly heart. However, when people say that you can't put a price on love, let's be honest. Oh, yes you can! To the tune of about \$6,000.

*Jill Couch Lambert
Lexington
EnergyUnited*

FRED'S CAFE

Built in 1971, Fred's Cafe went up for sale when the owner was diagnosed with cancer. My husband Dean, cousin Anne, her husband Frank and I bought it.

The health department grade posted the day of the sale read 93.5, so how bad could it be?

With no building codes in 1971, the builders cut corners. Only two lights in the front worked. The hood covering the grill and deep fryer was aluminum, and there were no fire-extinguishers. Both bathrooms were dark and tiny. Using the commode required feeling for the seat, and then sitting sidewise. There was a pond of sewage under the building. The wiring and gas hook-ups were scary.

We spent almost three months cleaning, removing, replacing, repairing, re-plumbing, redoing, repainting, repairing and refinancing.

Within six months after opening, we replaced the compressor for the walk-in freezer. And someone broke in and took groceries, money and our cash register.

For five years, we watched money go like sand through an hour-glass. We replaced the heat pump, re-plumbed the

septic system again, graveled the parking lot, rebuilt the walk-in freezer and replaced the compressor again. We sold it in February 2004. We said thank God and good riddance!

*Carol Caudill Winebarger
Traphill
Surry-Yadkin EMC*

THE CAR

"Don't look a gift horse in the mouth," or "don't be ungrateful when given something," comes from estimating a horse's age by how worn its teeth are. And now we know that we should have at least peeked under the "horse's" hood.

For only \$1,000, my parents sold us The Car, which had run 100,000 miles flawlessly. It was a loss to them and a favor to our young family.

When the engine went, we were sick, but we decided that putting in a rebuilt engine would make The Car like new.

Not long after, the transmission went. We had invested so much money in The Car, we couldn't afford to get rid of it then, could we?

The AC followed suit, an eight-week repair mess.

We have lost track of miscellaneous other repairs, but after sinking \$7,000 into The Car, the heater core went out, we admitted defeat. The heater core would have been \$700 because it was buried in the dash. We sold The Car for \$500.

Lesson learned: ALWAYS look a gift horse in the mouth, or at least check its track record in Consumer Reports. (And if this story is published, at least some profit will have come from The Car.)

*Debbie Ingalls
Stanley
EnergyUnited*

THE YARD SALE

A few years back, we had a yard sale. It was the first one we had had in a long while so we decided to make it worth it and make a profit.

In the past, not many people had stopped at our yard sales, and we ended up taking home half of what we wanted to sell. So we went to Home Depot and bought a few plastic tables to set up. We loaded up the truck and headed to my grandparents' house, since they lived on

the street. We had hundreds of dollars worth of stuff for sale and were really excited.

Well, two hours passed and we had had *two* customers. We looked around for what we had sold and added everything up and we ended up with \$7. Take away gas to get to my grandparents' house, price tags and those four tables we bought, and we ended up with \$121.34 in the hole.

*Audrey Gilmore
Hope Mills
South River EMC*

THE DECK OUT BACK

In 1995, we had a deck built on the back of our house. It cost us \$2,500. My husband loved to sit on that deck and drink his beer and watch sports. Sometimes we would even sleep on it at night.

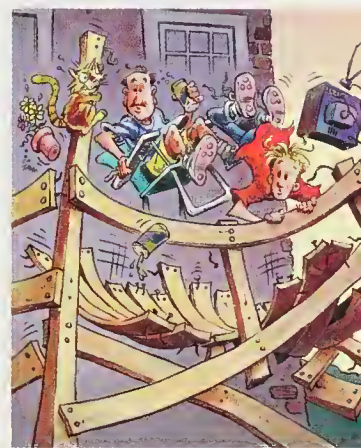
One weekend my husband and my nephew were watching a basketball game on TV on the deck. They were whooping and hollering, having a good time. My daughter and I were in the kitchen making sandwiches when I heard a loud noise. Looking out the window, I saw the deck was crashing to the ground. I laughed so hard I wet my pants. The TV went flying in the air. My husband and nephew were holding on for life. My daughter and I had a good laugh that day.

The deck was destroyed. Boy, was that a waste of money. The deck lasted for two weeks.

*Alice Moore
Bunnlevel
South River EMC*

THE BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE

Bill and I were married in June 1948. We were very frugal, especially Bill. The first year we were married, Bill wouldn't let me spend any money except for our bare necessities. We didn't even have a refrigerator. We used my parents' next door. We both worked at MCAS Cherry Point Marine Base and made a



continued on p. 20

pretty good salary, but Bill kept saying we were in for a big depression.

Then one evening, an encyclopedia salesman knocked on our door selling encyclopedias and volumes of literature books. We fell lock, stock and barrel for his gift of gab and bought the whole set.

When they were delivered, it took one-fourth of our little living room to store them. This was many years before we had children, and by the time we did have children the encyclopedias were obsolete.

We did learn a lesson from this because since that time we have never bought anything from a door-to-door salesperson (except from school kids).

*Betty Ward Motes
Newport
Harkers Island EMC*

THE HIGHCHAIR

I was seven months pregnant when I first attended a baby safety class. The leader began by showing newspaper arti-

cles and statistics of children injured or killed by falling out of highchairs. I was sitting next to my rich friend. She wrote out a check, no problem. I knew we didn't have the money but my baby was not going to suffer; I put ours on the Visa.

My husband nearly had a baby of his own when I told him the news. I explained that the feeding table was also a bathtub, swing and chalkboard. I rationalized, "We will have it forever. We'll pass it on to our grandchildren."

The Babee Tenda served us well for our first child. We never did use the swing. By the time our second child came along, the bathtub was torn and no amount of scrubbing could sanitize the table. We still use it as a toddler table but I don't think our grandchildren will see it. Still, they will probably hear about the \$400 highchair.

*Catherine Busam
Youngsville
Wake EMC*

Send us your best Earn \$50

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“CURRITUCK AFTERNOON”

ART BY DEMPSEY ESSICK

Dempsey Essick's new watercolor painting, "Currituck Afternoon," shows Currituck Beach Light Station in Corolla. The lighthouse is the northernmost one in North Carolina and the only one whose bricks remain unpainted. The artist focused on the three-story, double keepers quarters, which had a wall down the middle, separating the house into two, mirror-image apartments. Dempsey's detail includes the interconnected roof gutters designed to route rainwater to the covered and ventilated underground cisterns at each side of the house. The cisterns were the only source of fresh water for the two families who shared the three-story dwelling.

As is the artist's custom, he has included the rebus-type hidden image of a hummingbird in this painting. Actually, in this piece, there are two hidden hummingbirds.

The Essick Studio is offering the print at a discounted price to Carolina Country readers. It is a limited edition (1,019) and each is signed and numbered. Mention "Carolina Country," and the studio will waive the \$15 shipping fee. The cost of the limited edition print is \$128.40 (includes sales tax). The image measures 15¾ by 24 inches and is shipped flat.

Contact The Dempsey Essick Gallery, P.O. Box 1149, Welcome, NC 27374. Phone: (336) 731-3499. Web: www.dempseyessick.com



If you drive through certain parts of eastern North Carolina this summer and fall, you're likely to see an unfamiliar sight growing on roadside farms—a dense, towering crop that may reach 12 feet before the first frost. Greater than its stature in the field is the amazing market potential and versatility of this new North Carolina crop. It's called kenaf (pronounced kuh-NAFF), a fiber crop that may one day outpace tobacco and cotton in North Carolina's agricultural economy.

A group of farmers concentrated in Greene, Pitt and a few neighboring counties is growing kenaf, *Hibiscus cannabinus* L,

Eastern North Carolina growers hope to become the world's largest single source of

PROCESSED KENAF

which is closely related to okra, cotton and hollyhocks. Kenaf is cultivated worldwide as a fiber crop, with the vast majority grown in China as a substitute for jute. Those who've heard of the plant might recognize it as an alternative source of pulp for paper, much like hemp. But kenaf's uses are surprisingly broad. The stem's soft, inner fiber is incredibly absorbent and lightweight and has diverse applications in lumber, automotive parts, animal litter and bedding, and wastewater treatment, to name a few.

"They say kenaf is the crop with a thousand uses but no market," says North Carolina State University Extension agronomist David Jordan.

But the farmers in North Carolina are well on their way to changing that. These kenaf growers and their business partners are employing a ground-up farming approach: They are growing the crop, processing it and developing markets for their product. At the heart of this enterprise is Greene Natural Fibers with a 40,000-square-foot processing facility served by Pitt and Greene EMC. It's in central Greene County just north of Snow Hill and employs 30 people full-time. Greene Natural Fibers represents a major financial commitment by a group of farmers and investors.

Right now, GNF is supplying two primary markets: the animal bedding and automotive industries.

The kenaf plant has two distinct types of fiber.

The outer layer or bark is called "bast," and

it is long and stringy like jute or hemp; the interior or "core" is light and spongy like balsa wood. North Carolina's processed bast fiber is now supplying auto manufacturers, including Ford, Chrysler, General Motors, BMW and John Deere, for use in interior panels (doors and dashboards) and headliners. The core fiber is being marketed as premium animal bedding to horse owners all along the Atlantic seaboard.

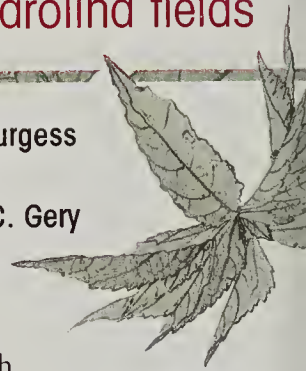
"We are not a niche crop, and kenaf is not a fad," says Paul Skillicorn, one of GNF's founders and its product development and research point man. "The things that kenaf can do are very mainline."

"It's the only major new crop to be

This versatile fiber crop can replace tobacco in eastern North Carolina fields

By Carla Burgess

Photos by
Michael E.C. Gery



introduced in North Carolina in the last few decades," he says. "I think it will be more successful than cotton in the long run."

Kenaf and North Carolina appear to be a match made in heaven. A tropical plant native to Africa, kenaf flourishes in regions with high humidity, loamy soils, abundant rainfall and a long growing season. Kenaf also may have found an ideal cultural and economic climate in which to grow. The kenaf industry in North Carolina is emerging at a time when tobacco farmers are struggling to hold on to their livelihoods in the face of slashed subsidies, price supports and allotments.

"Kenaf is making it—absent any kind of subsidies," says Skillicorn. "That's an incredible home run in agriculture today."

Another significant advantage of growing kenaf in eastern North Carolina is the skill and expertise of tobacco farmers who may choose to diversify, he says. They are reputed for their ability to follow the stringent protocols that are required to produce a superior crop. Kenaf must be "retted" in the field, a necessarily precise drying period in which the inner fiber begins to loosen from the outer bark. Once in the processing facility, the bast is mechanically separated from the core.

"Our processing plant is very analogous to a cotton gin," says Andy Moyer, a kenaf grower and GNF's agricultural

production manager. The separated fibers are then baled and formed into pellets for second-tier manufacturers who will further refine the product for their specific use.

It's hard to imagine that what looks like a pile of fluff could be so sophisticated in its usefulness. For instance, when the core is ground to a fine powder, the material can bind to and filter contaminants from wastewater. Skillicorn calls this substance the "poor man's activated carbon." The product is foremost in new technology-related markets GNF is seeking. Meanwhile, GNF has partnered with the nearby town of Farmville to apply this sludge-activation method in a demonstration project. Core fibers could be similarly used as a biological agent in cleaning up oil spills and other environmental pollutants.

Skillicorn says GNF doesn't plan to expand into the pulping of fibers for paper production. Such an enterprise is costly and risky, as it is difficult for kenaf to compete reliably with tree pulp on a large scale. However, he can envision supplying "boutique markets" once the company has tens of thousands of acres of crop supplying its primary target markets. For now the farmed acreage in North Carolina is relatively small. In the 2002-2003 season, kenaf was grown on 4,500 acres in Greene, Pitt and Wilson counties.

The company will continue to select and pursue high-value applications for its fibers. The fibers can be used as fillers and extenders in composite lumber or particle board; reinforced plastics and other synthetic products; potting soil; and even pharmaceuticals and cosmetics.

Kenaf also has an environmentally friendly appeal. It is a natural, organic and renewable resource. It provides high yield without significant irrigation. And it can be recycled.

"Automotive panels made with kenaf are recyclable and also much safer than some of the plastics," says Moye. "On impact, it crushes like an egg carton as opposed to breaking into shards of plastic."

In the automotive industry, kenaf could grow into an unparalleled product.

"Detroit is always looking for ways to make things

Kenaf Facts

- ✂ Kenaf is not related to hemp or marijuana, but there is a striking similarity in the leaf shape of some varieties.
- ✂ Kenaf may yield 6 to 10 tons of dry fiber per acre per year. This is three to five times greater than the yield for Southern pine trees, which require seven to 40 years before they're ready for harvest.
- ✂ The outer fiber or bast makes up 40 percent of the stalk's dry weight; the inner fiber or core makes up the other 60 percent.
- ✂ In the right climate, kenaf grows 14 feet tall in four to five months.
- ✂ Kenaf flowers at the end of the growing season, producing showy hibiscus-like blossoms.
- ✂ Kenaf has been cultivated for at least 4,000 years, with its roots in Egypt.
- ✂ Kenaf reportedly has more than 129 different names worldwide, like "deccan hemp" in Bombay and "java jute" in Indonesia.

lighter and cheaper," says Moye.

"Almost all of the major automobile companies are focusing on natural fibers. You've already got coconut fibers in the seats of BMWs."

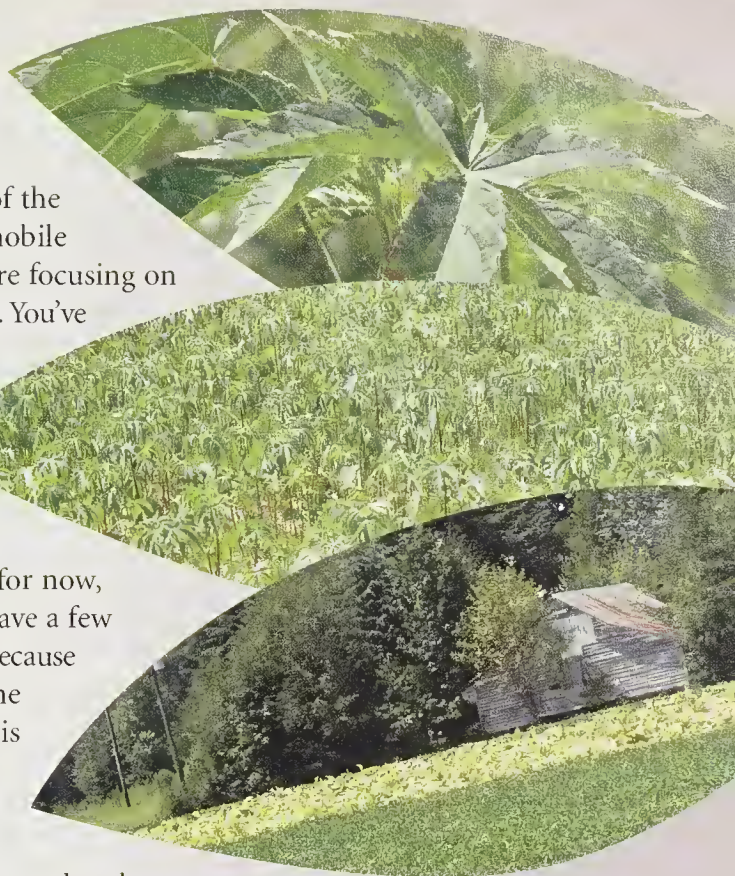
At least for now, kenaf does have a few limitations. Because of its bulk, the raw product is expensive to ship. To earn a profit, the grower ideally needs to be within 30 to 40 miles of a processing facility. Also, a significant pest in kenaf crops is the nematode, a parasitic worm. Because crop rotation is an important method of controlling infestations, intensive cultivation in a single region could present challenges, says agronomist Jordan. Developing acceptable pesticides and creating nematode-resistant varieties are important research goals.

Kenaf ventures have failed in Texas, Mississippi and California, but Skillicorn says North Carolina farmers and entrepreneurs have learned from those experiences. He and Moye also acknowledge the insight gained from a grant given by the Golden Leaf Foundation in 2000 to the nonprofit Carolina Kenaf Farmers Foundation, of which Skillicorn was president. The grant allowed several North Carolina farmers to test the waters with minimal financial risk. Fundamentally, that project demonstrated that kenaf is a viable crop in the region. The foundation also received a \$300,000 start-up grant from the General Assembly administered through the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center.

Skillicorn says he is confident that kenaf is an indelible feature on North Carolina's agricultural and economic map. The company's harvest goal is to eventually reap an average of 5 tons of dry fiber per acre per year. Its ultimate goal is to become the world's largest single-source supplier of processed kenaf.

"We are headed through a difficult time, as with any new business, in which we have to create and sustain the markets that we've addressed and also develop some new markets," he says. "We will succeed in spades in that endeavor."

Raleigh-based writer Carla Burgess has contributed many articles to Carolina Country, including stories about Hyde County onions, Yadkin County popcorn, and dental care for rural communities.



TOP: Close-up of a kenaf plant, a fiber crop that may be more successful than cotton, according to Paul Skillicorn of Greene Natural Fibers.

MIDDLE: A field of kenaf, which is closely related to okra, cotton and hollyhocks.

BOTTOM: Kenaf grows in the foreground of this North Carolina farm, while tobacco grows behind it.

Jimmy and the Bean Bucket

by AlexSandra Lett

On summer days we kinfolk have always set a spell with Mama and Daddy (Ruby and Bud Lett) under the huge pecan tree in the backyard of the farmhouse they have called home for more than 55 years. We are often surrounded by garden pickin's covering the picnic table and watermelons sprawled on the grass.

During a recent Sunday afternoon we were sharing stories from when my brother Jimmy, my sister Carolyn and I were growing up in the 1950s and '60s. Noticing the garden nearby we breathed a sign of relief that there were no peas to shell, beans to snap, or corn to shuck. We laughed as we recalled the "Jimmy and the Bean Bucket" tale.

Jimmy had been pickin' on Carolyn and me for hours, and Mama yelled "an idle mind is the devil's workshop" and gave him something to do. She handed him a large galvanized bucket and told him to pick beans until it was full. Jimmy was fussing and fuming when he spotted a lard container on the back porch and sneakily put it upside down inside the big bucket. Carolyn and I were surprised when he brought the bucket back in a shorter time than expected and filled to the brim with beans.

Jimmy dressed quickly for a night out with the neighborhood boys and took off in Grandpa's 1957 Chevrolet. Carolyn and I started stringing and snapping the beans. Within a few minutes we realized there weren't enough for canning because the lard container took up so much space. Indeed, Mama had a hissy fit!

The next day my smart-alec brother was sentenced to picking two large buckets of beans while Carolyn and I watched soap operas on television. Then he had to help us prepare them for canning which put a damper on his plans to go cruisin' in the Chevy.

Meanwhile berries were as plentiful as beans in our childhood. When Daddy mentioned one Sunday that he didn't have many blueberries this year because the bushes nearby have suffered from the drought, we remembered the many times we took to the woods to pick wild blackberries. We always came back covered with mosquito and redbug bites but any pain was worth the gain of Mama's blackberry concoctions. That night we would gobble down her straight-from-the-oven blackberry cobbler and help her make blackberry jelly.

The next morning Mama would fix platters of perfect pancakes in the cast iron skillet. While some folks preferred Karo syrup — the one that said on the label "gives your pancake a college education" — our favorite topping was blackberry jelly. You never tasted the world's most mouth-watering pancakes until you have eaten them with Mama's freshly made blackberry jelly, a house specialty from her kitchen, which we fondly call "Ruby's Restaurant."

As I grow older and wiser I enjoy shooting the breeze even more with the mighty fine folks I call family, and finally I understand now how routine can become so comfortable. It doesn't matter whether we're talking about beans or berries or babies, we share rich memories and create new ones.

On summer afternoons I load my car with tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, beans, watermelons, and cantaloupes — Daddy's prize possessions — to deliver to friends hither and yon. I always leave with more than gifts from the garden. I also carry ideas for writing about a life ripe for the pickin'.

(The author has recently returned to her roots in Buckhorn community where she has joined the eighth generation of Letts growing up near the Cape Fear River at the Lee-Harnett County line. They are members of Central EMC.)



"Timeless Moons"

"Jimmy and the Bean Bucket" is excerpted from the new book, "Timeless Moons, Seasons of the Fields and Matters of the Heart," by AlexSandra "Sandy Lynn" Lett. The book features anecdotes and reflections related to the 52 weeks of the year. "Timeless Moons" highlights the moon and how it affects planting, cutting hair, chopping wood, and various famous moons like MoonPies and moonshine.

The saying "once in a blue moon" means the second full moon in a month, which occurs every 33 months. Look for one in the sky this July 31, 2004. "Sandy Lynn" is hosting a community gathering that day in Buckhorn community near Sanford.

Autographed copies of the hardcover edition of "Timeless Moons" may be ordered for \$24 including sales tax and postage. Send checks or money orders to AlexSandra Lett, 1996 Buckhorn Road, Sanford, NC 27330. Phone: (919) 258-9299. E-mail: LettsSetaSpell@aol.com. Web: www.atimelessplace.com

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See rounds 1-3 on our website.

From Terri McKay, Mt. Olive

- You know pastry is a chicken stew, not a dessert item.
- Every time you visit someone you're offered something to eat and a glass of tea.
- Your granddaddy always wore overalls and your grandma always wore an apron.
- After a day at the beach, you have sat in sandy bathing suit bottoms all the way home.
- In summer you have home-grown tomatoes with every meal.
- You got teary-eyed when you read all these, because it made you nostalgic and so proud to be from this great state.

From Barbara Jones, Lewisville

- You don't use the expression "you guys" for females.
- You say "y'all" for one person.
- "Ain't" can mean the word aren't or the word not.
- Yesterday is pronounced "yesterdee."
- You remember when EMC used to be REA.

From Stephen Matthews (from Catawba County) and his wife (from Caldwell County), who live in Conover:

- You go to the "fire" instead of the "fair."
- A poke is a bag.
- A spider is a cast iron frying pan with legs.
- Snits are dried apples.
- You're invited in to eat possum and sweet taters, or ground hog and gravy.

From Vickie Cruthis, Trinity:

- You know what "standards" are on pick-up trucks.

From Alice Carter of Lexington:

- When it rains and the creek rises, everyone gathers to see how high it rose.
- Summer vacation comes in the fall, because you raise tobacco and that comes first in the summer.

- A cuspidor "spit cup" is an accessory in the living room.
- You buy "Cheerwines."
- You're more comfortable barefooted.

From Sandra Hobbs:

- You burn your grass instead of mow it.

From Zinny:

- You know that "chunk" the ball means to throw it.
- You know a hamburger "all the way" means it has chili and slaw on it.
- You know what livermush is and love it.
- You know the difference between a creek and a branch.
- You can recognize a copperhead and your heart drops when you see one.
- You know that to "nuss" a baby is to hold and rock it.

From G.W. Baker, Hertford:

- You have been hit with a dried cow pie, or hit someone else with one, while messing around in a pasture on Sunday afternoon.
- You made a tractor out of grandma's sewing spool with a rubber band and a Popsicle stick.
- You made a cherry-popper out of a reed and used it. (Spitballs work almost as well as fresh wild cherries.)
- You giggered a water moccasin while after frogs.
- You walked behind a mule breaking wind while using a drain buster.
- You sat down to a black lady's table (assuming you are white) and pigged out and didn't even realize you weren't kin folks.
- You had the opportunity to play with the neighbor's kids and become friends and hardly knew they were of a different race until you started to school and had to go your "separate but equal ways."
- You think that those "Yankee interlopers" from Virginia are carpetbaggers, when all they are is kin coming back home.



- You appreciate that the good old R.E.A. sure has helped make living in the countryside a lot more comfortable.
- You grew up to eat aged beef that was knocked in the head, butchered, fried with onion gravy and the whole process started that morning.
- You had to ring the neck, scald and pluck the prized pullet for the Methodist preacher's clan for Sunday dinner.
- You had to be at grandma's house when she took out the backbones from some herring grandpa had pickled from the winter run and had to eat the meat that was left on the backbone.

From Luthon Reynolds, Morven:

- You know what Red Rock, Moon Pie and Squirrel Nuts mean.
- You have at least one relative that raises collards.
- Every vehicle you own has a gun rack.
- When you talk stock you're talking chickens, cows, turkeys, and cars.
- You have two pairs of boots: one for hunting and fishing, the other for racing.

From Deborah Suarez, Hope Mills:

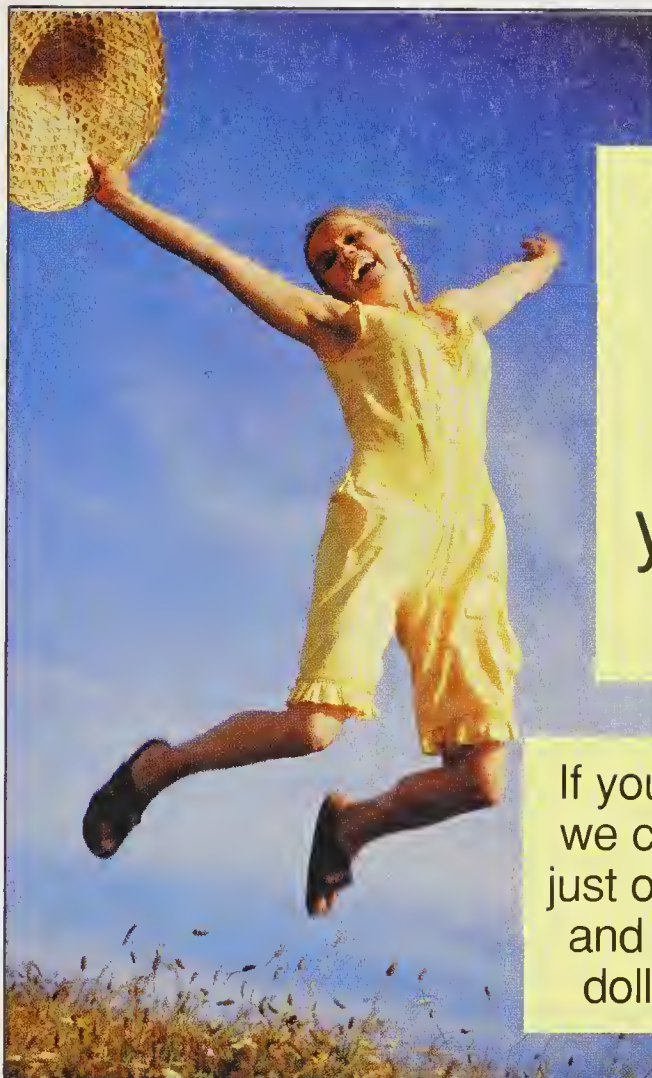
- Your preacher regularly says "ain't."
- You don't inform on someone, but 'atelling you now.
- You know the definition of "onliest."
- Your window has an 'r' in it.

From Angie Hawkins, Waynesville

- Your son's wardrobe consists of work Carharts, school Carharts, and Sundee Carharts.
- After running into an acquaintance or two, they say to you, "I'm glad you got to see me."
- Your weekend entertainment is seeing who can shoot the tater out of the tater gun the farthest.
- "Getting lucky" means you got that 'possum when he crossed the road in front of your truck.
- Most of the photographs in your house show one person and at least one dead animal.
- Your Christmas tree lights had empty shotgun shells on each bulb and your ornaments were brass bullets tied with red string.

From Jeannette Williams

- You know what a nab is and that there are only two kinds to choose from: Lance or Toms. You only eat one of the two and believe yours is the only choice that makes sense.
- You go to Sunday School at 10 when it really starts at 9:45. You go to church at 11:15 when it really starts at 11. And you complain if you get out a few minutes after 12. You also fuss when the back pews are full first.
- You know who Spud Webb, Lorenzo Charles and Chris Corchianni are.
- You know how to pull, tie, crop, top and sucker bacca. And you believe that those were the good ole days.
- You know what a boweavel is, but do not know how to spell it.



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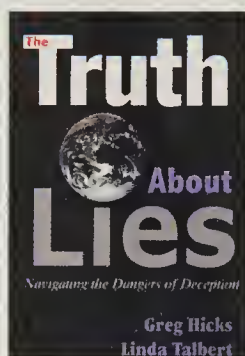
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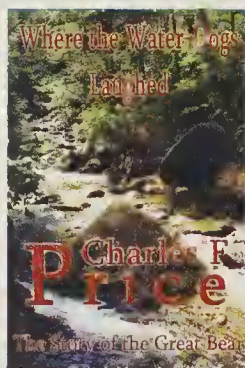
Sweet stuff

In the new cookbook "Sweet Stuff: Karen Barker's Favorite Desserts," the award-winning pastry chef shares 160 recipes, as well as memories of cooking and baking during her Brooklyn childhood. "The Basics: A Baker's Building Blocks" offers tips on preparing recipes made in advance, along with chapters on pies, cookies, custards and fruit creations. Barker also offers innovative pairings of base recipes with sauces, such as "Lemon Chiffon Ice Cream" drizzled with Concord grape syrup. Published by The University of North Carolina Press. Hardcover, \$29.95. Call (800) 848-6224 or visit <http://uncpress.unc.edu/books/T-7133.html>



"Where the Water Dogs Laughed"

This fourth novel by Charles Price, in a series that weaves together factual family history and fiction about 19th-century Southern Appalachian life, focuses on mortal love, loss and questions of race and class against the backdrop of traditional mountain culture. Price is author of three other books including "Freedom's Altar," which won a Sir Walter Raleigh award, and teaches in the North Carolina mountains. "Where the Water Dogs Laughed: The Story of the Great Bear" is published by High Country Publishers in Boone. Hardcover, \$24.95. Call (828) 964-0590 or visit www.highcountrypublishers.com



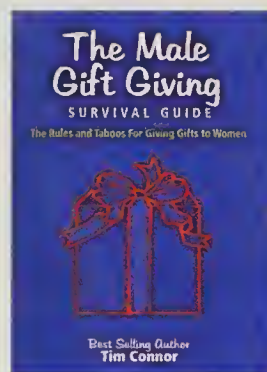
"Life Is Short, But It's Wide"

"Life Is Short, But It's Wide (in the Southern State of Reality)" is a ranging collection of down-home essays that covers the whackiness of Southern life. Author Ann Ipock, a North Carolina native who currently lives in South Carolina, aims her wit at everyday topics such as grilling, southern sayings, dogs, wild women, supper club parties and bathroom breaks. Published by Carolina Avenue Press in Boonville. Softcover, \$14.95. Call (336) 244-4440 or visit www.carolinapress.com



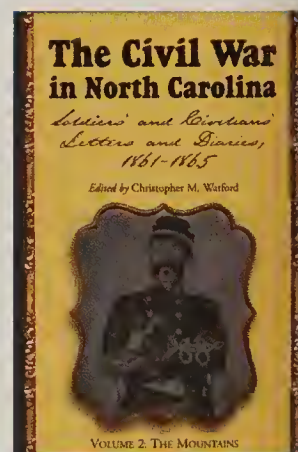
Male gift-giving 101

Car washes, cleaning kits, frying pans, cheap jewelry or nearly anything carved out of a coconut do not generally rank high as gifts in the hearts of women. But for Pete's sake, how is a man to know what to give a woman? "The Male Gift Giving Survival Guide" understands this masculine quandary and spells everything out. It covers 20 common gift-giving mistakes, 20 male gift-giving rules, and examples of really good and bad gifts. In the chapter on "gifts that will get a smile," author Tim Connor lists a poem or photo collage. In the chapter on bad gifts, "no-nos" include appliances and mops. Published by Worldwise Press in Davidson. Softcover, wire-bound, \$19.95. Call (704) 895-1230 or visit www.timconnor.com



Civil War: The Mountains

"The Civil War in North Carolina: Soldiers' and Civilians' Letters and Diaries, 1861-1865, Volume 2: The Mountains" presents letters, diary entries and other documents that tell the experiences of people from the mountain counties of North Carolina. The counties included are Alleghany, Ashe, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Cherokee, Haywood, Madison, Mitchell, Rutherford, Surry and Wilkes. The book is arranged chronologically from 1861-1865. Before each letter or diary entry, information is provided about the writer. Edited by Christopher M. Watford, who edited "The Civil War in North Carolina: Volume 1, The Piedmont." Published by McFarland & Company, Inc. of Jefferson. Hardcover, \$39.95. Call (800) 253-2187 or visit www.mcfarlandpub.com



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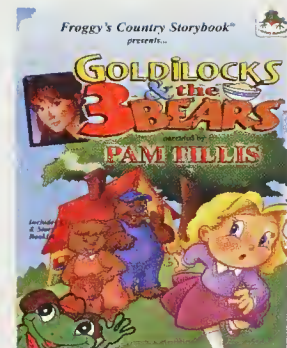
"MerleFest 2004"

A new CD, recently released from the popular annual music festival in Wilkesboro, is a compilation of previously released tracks by artists new to the MerleFest stage. The 18-track collection on "Fresh Faces at MerleFest 2004" includes songs such as "Wishing Well Blues," "Love Like the Movies," and "You Can't Take It With You," along with bands such as Acoustic Hot Tuna, The Gourds, and Wischild. \$11.95 Visit www.mfstore.org or call (800) 871-2738.



Goldilocks cassette

Part of Froggy's Country Storybook Series, the tale of "Goldilocks & The Three Bears" is narrated by singer Pam Tillis with a country music theme. Songs on the CD include "The Happiest Girl (Bear) in the Whole USA," "Achy Breaky Heart," "Sweet Dreams," and "Stranger in My House." The CD also comes with an insert telling the Goldilocks fairy tale. The cassette is part of a new series of children's audio books where a central character, Froggy, introduces the celebrity narrators and invites the children to come along with them. For example, in "The Emperor's New Clothes," singer Vince Gill is among story readers. "Goldilocks & The Three Bears" CD is \$9.99. Call (888) 737-6449 or visit www.froggyscountrystory.com



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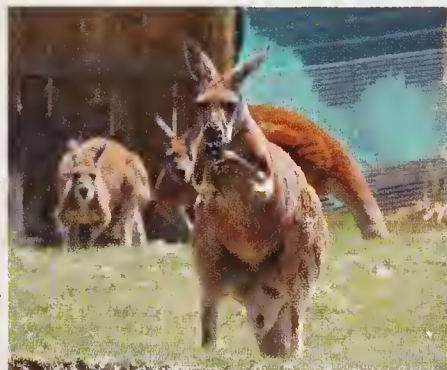


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Photo by Tom Gillespie



Australian Walkabout exhibit

Cockatoos, red kangaroos, lizards, wallabies, pythons, kookaburras and a skink are part of the recently opened new 1.5-acre exhibit at the North Carolina Zoo in Asheboro. The first display of Australian wildlife in the zoo's history, "Australia Walkabout" showcases the animals' relationships to their habitats and links to aboriginal Australian cultures. The exhibit also has typical Australian plants. Call (336) 879-7000 or visit www.nczoo.org




Pet grave markers

Pottery grave markers have been used in the past in Alamance, Buncombe, Moore, Randolph and Union counties as an inexpensive but relatively permanent means of marking graves. Pottery Markers of Moore County offers replicas of these historic grave markers for use as pet memorials. A two-line inscription includes the pet's name and years of birth and death. The markers are turned, inscribed, salt-glazed, and signed by fifth- and sixth-generation Seagrove potters Sid and Matt Luck. The cost of each traditional North Carolina pottery grave marker is \$65. Custom designed markers and crematory urns are available as well. Call (910) 948-9996 or visit www.PotteryMarkers.com.

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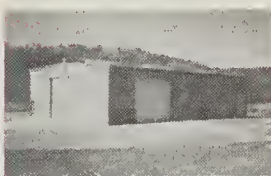
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What was the question?



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8 6 8 7 4 7 6
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L	W	T	O
E	F	F	R
F	N	U	L
A	M	I	Y

Puzzles are E _ _ _ _
_ _ _ _ _
_ _ _ _ _ Y.

Starting with an F and ending with the Y in this letter box, can you spell out the five words in this sentence? You can move in any direction, up, down, left, right, or diagonally. Each letter is used only once.

Answers on page 34.

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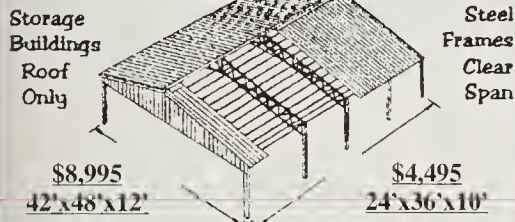
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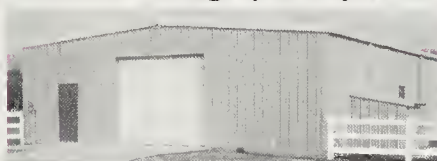
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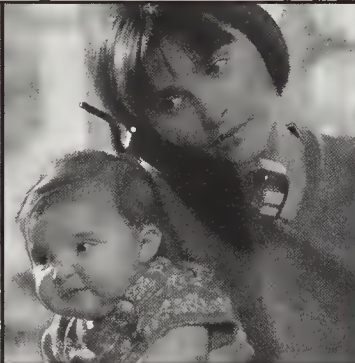
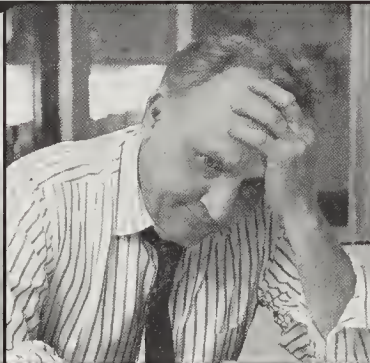
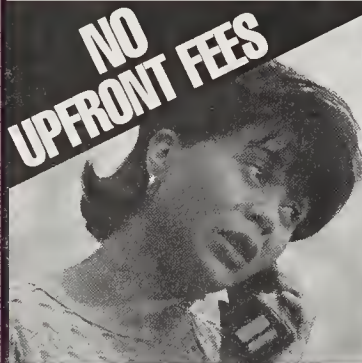
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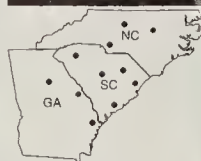
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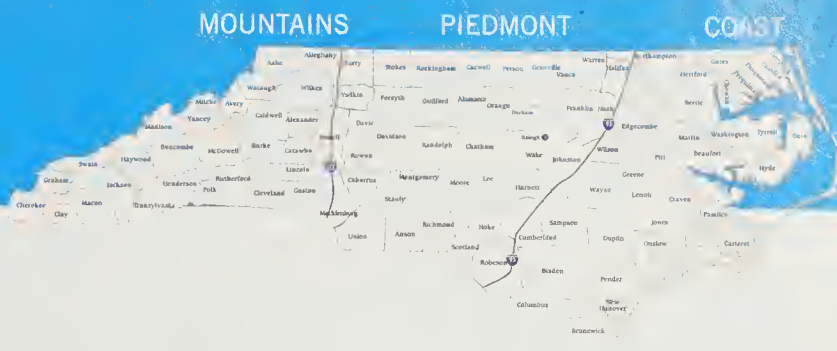
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continued on p. 36

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JULY EVENTS



Vivid paintings such as Robert Johnson's "Doughton Park" are on display July 1 through August 28 in Asheville. The show is called "Scenic Overlook: Blue Ridge Parkway." Call (800) 291-2513 or visit www.bluespiral1.com

continued from p. 35

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(EAST OF I-95)

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July 3, Beaufort
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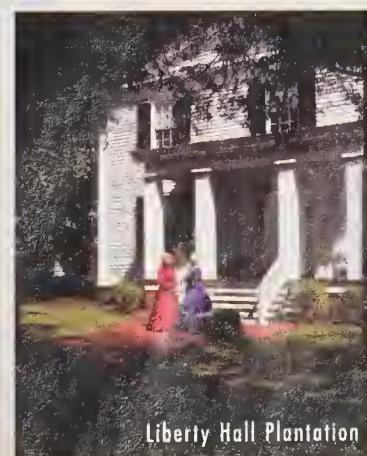
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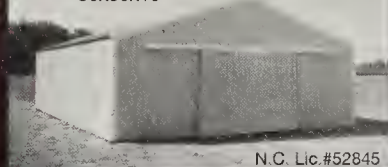
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GARDENING FOCUS

Crabgrass Control

Of all weed-like grasses that infect lawn areas, crabgrass is by far the most troublesome.

Weed young plants by hand if the area is small. Maintain lawn at sufficient height so that young crabgrass seedlings cannot gain a foothold, or use some chemical measure of control, which will either kill the crabgrass or will prevent it from reseeding. An effective chemical method is the application of disodium methyl arsonate (available under various trade names).

The first application should be made early in July; the second a week or 10 days later; and the third application should be in mid-August. The last, or final, application should be made a week later. Applied under favorable conditions (soil moist and temperature moderate), there should be no injury to permanent lawn grasses.

Where soil is dry and temperatures high, serious injury may occur from its use. If soil is dry, it should be watered thoroughly the day before the spraying. Do not spray when the temperature is excessively high, 90 degrees Fahrenheit or more. During hot weather, spray on cloudy days or late in the afternoon to avoid direct sun. Follow manufacturer's directions.

With the advent of summer, gardeners get 'fired up' regarding outdoor activities. Some plants are adapted to growth in hot and dry weather, but most require moisture. Keep on the alert for insects.

Kid stuff

Gardening can teach children science, history, nutrition and math, and it offers good shoulder-to-shoulder time with parents and grandparents. A study reveals that children who participated in gardening activities had a greater willingness to try new fruits and vegetables. And an adult who supervised a large group of children stated, "Our mission is to use horticulture to grow good gardens and good kids."

Planning a garden teaches counting and measuring, graphing, fractions and percentages. After measuring the garden space, help your child make a scale drawing on paper. Let a one-inch square on the paper represent one square foot in the garden. Example: If your garden measures 10 feet by 10 feet, have the child draw 10 rows of 10 one-inch boxes. Ask him or her to calculate how many plants the garden can sustain if you insert one plant per square foot. Ask what percentage of the garden is 24 pepper plants. Cross-pollinating math and gardening adds up to a terrific learning experience. Nursery catalog pictures are helpful.

Before the first foray into gardening, you might want to set aside some empty plastic cups or yogurt containers for indoor planting. Try saving seeds from favorite fruits like apples, pears and pumpkins. Help children chart the seedlings' progress until they're ready to be taken outside. Then work together on special markers to note the plants' locations.

Young children usually are more interested in the activities than the end results, so let them be a part of the decision-making process — what to



Canna Bengal Tiger was imported from India in 1963. This orange flowered variegated canna responds well in sun. The 72-inch tall hybrid blooms green and yellow striped leaves, which are topped by bright orange blooms. This canna also will grow in water as an aquatic.

plant, when and why. Digging planting holes, filling them with water, looking for bugs, learning to read seed packets and making plant markers are great activities to encourage.

For more July gardening advice, go to the "Carolina Gardens" section of carolinacountry.com



HORT shorts

✂ To achieve a longer blooming period, keep faded blooms of annuals pinched-off or cut-off.

✂ Flowers for indoor decorations should be cut early in the morning. Cut at an angle to insure long vase life. Immediately place in container of tepid water. Among good cut

flowers are zinnias, sunflowers, crinums, dahlias, rudbeckias, and Mexican sunflowers (*Tithonia rotundifolia*.)

✂ These annuals often become leggy after their first flush of bloom: impatiens, begonias, an salvias Lady in Red and Coral Nymph. They can be trimmed back by one-

third. Plants grow back faster if you leave some green foliage. Water them and add a slow-release granular fertilizer.

✂ Hummingbirds are attracted to trumpet honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*), trumpet vine (*Campsis radicans*) and cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*).

✂ Long periods without rain can stress trees. Water deeply and provide more mulch to keep roots cool and provide moisture. To conserve water, irrigate in early morning or late afternoon to conserve moisture.

Decks can shade a house and let cool breezes in

By James Dulley

An overheated concrete patio can create a lot of energy problems, in addition to being uncomfortable under the intense summer sun. When properly designed for a specific location, a wood deck can shade a house and can reduce air-conditioning bills and peak electricity demand.

A hot concrete patio radiates its heat back to your home's walls and into the house through any uncovered windows. This increases the air-conditioning load. Concrete has a very high thermal mass, so it continues to give off heat into the air above it and to adjacent structures well into the evening as it slowly begins to cool.

Anything you can do—such as eliminating an uncomfortably hot patio or building an efficient wood deck—that allows you to be outdoors more often will save energy. Whenever you are outdoors, you will not have to keep your house as cool indoors and this reduces air-conditioning costs.

Also, it is a well-accepted fact that people who spend more time outdoors in the natural heat are more comfortable indoors at a higher room temperature. If you can set your central air conditioner just two degrees higher, the energy savings can be five to ten percent.

Building a wood deck with a sun-deflecting side is your best and most efficient design. Try to build the deck floor high enough so at least one side is several inches above the ground or the old patio. If it is built too close to the ground, air will not be able to freely flow beneath it to keep it cooler.

The key to a solar-efficient deck design is creating a vertical barrier that shades the deck and the house wall while letting the natural breezes through. The design of the vertical wall on the deck will vary somewhat

depending on which direction the deck faces. The sun is highest in the sky when it is shining from the south at noon. For designing your vertical barriers, you can find simple solar charts (sun's position) at your library or just hold up a stick at several times of the day and measure the shadow length.



A wood deck that deflects sun.

Install vertical posts along the side of the deck in the direction of the most sun. Using six or eight-inch wide lumber, position pieces horizontally on the posts to create louvers. Tilt them so the most intense summer sun is not striking the deck and some of the heat is reflected away from your house wall. Also, space them far enough apart so natural breezes will freely flow between them. If you tilt them properly, the lower winter sun will shine through the spacing.

Another simpler option is to install sun-control screening across the vertical posts. This type of screening will block up to 90 percent of the sun's direct heat, yet it will still allow a breeze through it and a reasonable view of the yard. This may be important if you have children.

The best way to install the screening is with a do-it-yourself screen framing kit. When installed, these are often used to screen a porch and have a truly professional appearance. A support strip is screwed into the posts and the top and bottom cross pieces. The screen is placed over this strip and a finishing cap is snapped over it to trap the screening in place. You can easily remove the screening during the winter for more sun if you wish.

For greater efficiency, especially for shading the house, cover the top of the deck with additional tilted wooden louvers or just flat narrow wood strips. These can be spaced closer together because they will not impede any breezes. Tilt the louvers properly so the lower winter sun shines through.

Another way to enjoy more non-air-conditioning outdoor time is to build a do-it-yourself screened gazebo. Many are made of cedar or white vinyl and are available in precut or modular kits. Precut kits include all the pieces ready for assembly. Modular kits already have the eight or ten roof, wall and floor sections completed for assembly.

Write for (instantly download - www.dulley.com) Utility Bills Update No. 732 - DIY instructions and diagrams for attractive energy-saving two-level decks (east, south, west locations) and a buyer's guide of 15 screening/frame and gazebo kit manufacturers. Please include \$3.00 and a business-size SASE and send to James Dulley, Carolina Country, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244.

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Banana Cheesecake Dessert

2 packages (21.4 ounces each) strawberry no-bake cheesecake mix
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup butter or margarine, melted
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar
3 cups cold milk
1 can (8 ounces) crushed pineapple, well drained
3 medium firm bananas, sliced
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chocolate ice cream topping, warmed, divided
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup caramel ice cream topping, divided
1 carton (8 ounces) frozen whipped topping, thawed
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup chopped pecans
Maraschino cherries with stems

Set aside filling and strawberry topping packets from cheesecake mixes. Place contents of crust mix packets in a large bowl; add butter and sugar. Press into an ungreased

13-by-9-by-2-inch dish. In a mixing bowl, combine milk and contents of filling packets. Beat on low speed until blended. Beat on high for 3 minutes or until slightly thickened. Spread over crust. Chill for 1 hour.

Spread contents of strawberry topping packets over cheesecake. Top with pineapple and bananas. Drizzle with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of chocolate topping and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup caramel topping. Spread with whipped topping (dish will be full). Refrigerate for 2 hours or until set. Before serving, drizzle with remaining chocolate and caramel toppings. Top with pecans and cherries.

Yield: 16-20 servings.



Recipes are by Taste of Home magazine. For a sample copy, send \$2 to Taste of Home, Suite 4321, PO Box 990, Greendale WI 53129-0990. Visit the Web page at www.tasteofhome.com.

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Patriotic Taco Salad

1 pound ground beef
1 medium onion, chopped
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups water
1 can (6 ounces) tomato paste
1 envelope taco seasonings
6 cups tortilla or corn chips*
4 to 5 cups shredded lettuce
9 to 10 pitted large ripe olives, sliced lengthwise
2 cups (8 ounces) shredded cheddar cheese
2 cups cherry tomatoes, halved



In a large skillet over medium heat, cook beef and onion until meat is no longer pink; drain. Stir in the water, tomato paste and taco seasoning. Bring to boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, for 20 minutes.

Place chips in an ungreased 13-by-9-by-2-inch dish. Spread beef mixture evenly over the top. Cover with lettuce. For each star, arrange 5 olive slices together in the upper left corner. To form stripes, add cheese and tomatoes in alternating rows. Serve immediately.

Yield: 8 servings.

*Editor's Note: If you wish to prepare this salad in advance, omit the layer of chips and serve them with the salad.

Chilled Marinated Asparagus

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup packed brown sugar
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup cider vinegar
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup soy sauce
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup vegetable oil
4 teaspoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon garlic powder
2 pounds fresh asparagus, trimmed
1 cup chopped pecans, toasted



In a saucepan, combine the brown sugar, vinegar, soy sauce, oil, lemon juice and garlic powder. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, for 5 minutes. Refrigerate until cool.

Meanwhile, in a large skillet, bring $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of water to a boil. Add asparagus. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 3-5 minutes or until crisp-tender. Drain and rinse in cold water.

Place asparagus in a large resealable plastic bag; add marinade. Seal bag and turn to coat; refrigerate for 2 hours or overnight, turning occasionally. Drain and discard marinade. Place asparagus on a serving plate; sprinkle with pecans.

Yield: 8 servings.

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